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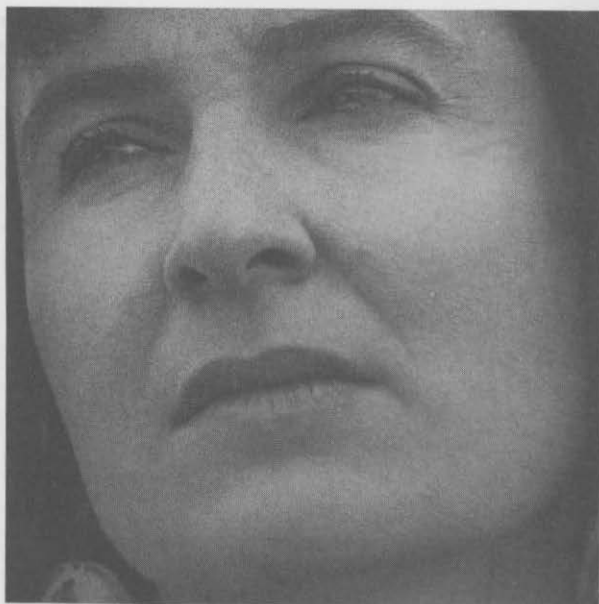
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Why I Write

Abstract

I have met writers who have told me that they 'have' to write, that writing to them is almost as necessary as breathing, an involuntary, undeniable compulsion. Frequently I have wished to be like those writers. Nevertheless I'm not. I write because writing interests me. I can't say it's always 'fun', although sometimes that is the case. Generally, though, I find it is serious act, even when I p/lay with the mus(e)/ic of words.

JOAN CRATE



Joan Crate was born in Yellowknife, and she has lived in the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Although she dropped out of high school, she now has an M.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Calgary. Her first novel, *Breathing Water*, was published in 1989. She has also published a book of poetry, *Pale as Red Ladies* (Brick). Her work has also been published in several Canadian journals and anthologies and aired on CBC radio. Joan Crate is presently teaching English at Red Deer College. This selection is from a novel in progress entitled *Night Terrors*, to be published by NeWest.

JOAN CRATE

Why I Write

I have met writers who have told me that they 'have' to write, that writing to them is almost as necessary as breathing, an involuntary, undeniable compulsion. Frequently I have wished to be like those writers. Nevertheless, I'm not. I write because writing interests me. I can't say it's always 'fun', although sometimes that is the case. Generally, though, I find it a serious act, even when I p/lay with the mus(e)/ic of words.

Maybe that's it. Maybe the feat of writing is like a sexual act, an encounter on sheets. Who knows what may happen, what might be created? There's always the possibility of surprise, of conceit, extended metaphor, rising action, climax. Or intense frustration.

Certainly writing requires not just a little passion, and there's the seduction of form, of abstract and concrete images, their ap/peals to the ears, all the senses: taste, touch, smell, shape, colour ('so much depends/upon//a red wheel/barrow').

The 'creative' urge is perhaps pro/creative. After having four children, I may still be attempting the impossible goal of achieving proficient parenthood. I continue producing works that are difficult to conceive, that prove to be unpredictable and disobedient in their infancy, words that never come when they're called, no matter by what name, what genre.

Or maybe writing provides me with an excuse for ignoring even the most basic rules of cooking, of cleaning.